

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

June 1, 2010

The Honorable Arne Duncan
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

As members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation, we are writing to offer our enthusiastic support for Massachusetts' Phase 2 application to the Race to the Top Fund.

Massachusetts has been recognized as a national leader in education reform and improvement since the passage of the landmark 1993 Education Reform Act, and our students consistently rank among the highest performers on U.S. and international measures of reading, mathematics and science achievement. At the same time, the Commonwealth recognizes that more needs to be done to close persistent achievement gaps and ensure that each and every one of our students receives a world-class public education. Massachusetts' Phase 2 application builds on our state's commitment to education reform by leveraging the provisions of a groundbreaking state law passed in January 2010 that expands high-performing charter schools in struggling school districts, increases state authority to turn around low-performing schools, and promotes the establishment of flexible and autonomous "Innovation Schools" statewide. We are confident that the new reforms enacted by the state will push student achievement to new heights. Support from the Race to the Top Fund will allow our students to reach those heights faster.

Massachusetts' Phase 2 application emphasizes four ambitious yet achievable goals. First, the Commonwealth will attract, develop, and retain an effective, diverse, and culturally competent educator workforce by developing a new statewide framework for teacher and principal evaluation in which impact on student growth will be a significant factor. Second, the state will provide curricular and instructional resources that support teacher effectiveness and success for all students by building a statewide teaching and learning system aligned with the Common Core Standards, which Massachusetts has played a major role in shaping. Third, Massachusetts will concentrate effective instruction and supports for educators, students, and families in its lowest performing schools by developing a specialized corps of educators prepared to tackle the challenges of low achieving schools, and by building district and state capacity to prevent low achievement and sustain progress. Finally, Massachusetts will substantially increase the number of students who graduate from high school ready for college and career by exposing more students to rigorous curricula and college-level work, particularly in STEM fields, and by better aligning high school curricula with college entrance requirements.

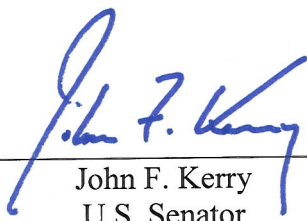
We believe that these initiatives will not only be a powerful impetus for dramatic change in Massachusetts, but they will also allow our state to continue to serve as a national model for educational improvement and reform. In shaping the Phase 2 application, our state's education

leaders have taken great care to retain the elements of the Phase 1 proposal that were highly-rated, while also strengthening proposals related to teacher evaluation, the use of data systems to monitor student progress, and the timeline for considering adoption of the Common Core Standards.

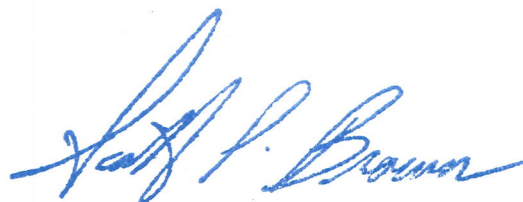
The Massachusetts Phase 2 application reflects the collaboration of a wide array of stakeholders, including superintendents, school boards, principals, advocates and the business community. Notably, the Commonwealth has also secured the endorsement of our state's largest teacher union, the Massachusetts Teachers Association, for its Race to the Top application. The Massachusetts application underscores its commitment to do education reform with the field, not to the field.

We encourage you to give Massachusetts' application your fullest consideration.

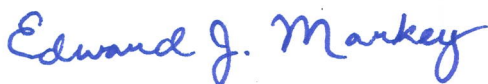
Sincerely,



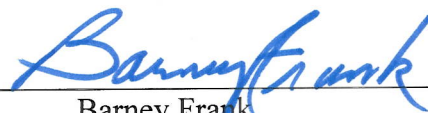
John F. Kerry
U.S. Senator



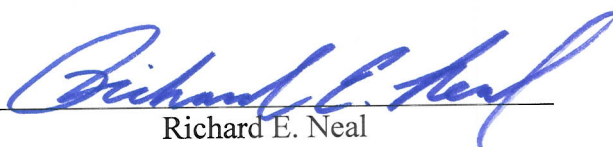
Scott P. Brown
U.S. Senator



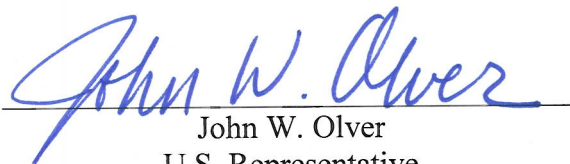
Edward J. Markey
U.S. Representative



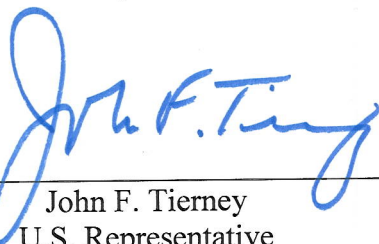
Barney Frank
U.S. Representative



Richard E. Neal
U.S. Representative



John W. Olver
U.S. Representative



John F. Tierney
U.S. Representative

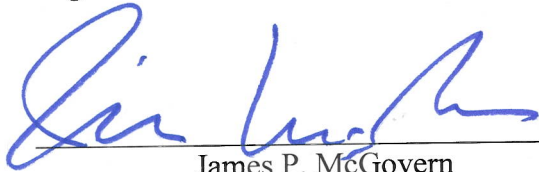


William Delahunt
U.S. Representative


The Honorable Arne Duncan

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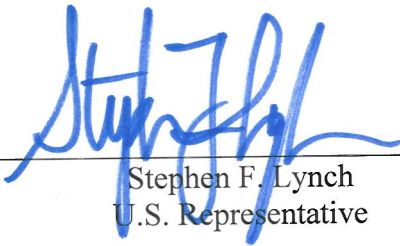
Page 3



James P. McGovern
U.S. Representative



Michael Capuano
U.S. Representative



Stephen F. Lynch
U.S. Representative



Niki Tsongas
U.S. Representative